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THE BASES OF DEMOCRACY IN CHINA.

KIA-LOK YEN.

IF ANYTHING is unthinkable, unbelievable, and even ridiculous, it is China's becoming a republic, the Occidental often declares to his Oriental acquaintance. China, he is likely to add, ruled over for four thousand years by an absolute, despotic government, with her archaic families, each under an absolute patriarch, her fixed class system, which allows no one to rise above the class into which he is born, her people uneducated, void of individual character, and having no capacity for co-operative enterprises, her ruling class caring for nothing but bribery and graft, her superstitious ideas and her heathen philosophy—how could she be fit for a democratic form of government?

Yet a republic has come into existence in China. A fact is a fact, and there must be some reason for it, obscure though it may be. It is the purpose of this article to point out some of the social, industrial, economic, and political institutions which seem to have favored the organization of a democratic government. These may in part account not only for what China has accomplished up to the present, but also for what she may accomplish in the future.

(1) SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

1. *The Family*.—The family in China is the fundamental social as well as political unit. It has often been described by Westerners as a patriarchal system, namely, having the father as the head and each family constituting an independent unit. This is undoubtedly true to a casual observer who does not see the inner workings of the family life. The father, though theoretically supreme, occupies himself only with the supporting of the family, while the mother is responsible for all the internal management of the home and for the social intercourse of the family with other families. Thus, the father and the mother demand equal respect from their children.

We are not here concerned with the reason why Chinese are so inclined to live together. Suffice it to say that it is not uncommon to find sometimes four or five generations living in the same household. The support of such a family devolves almost entirely upon the men members of the family while the women do the household work. In some families even the women work towards the support of the home by engaging in the occupations suitable to them, such as embroidering and weaving. The family is a living organism possessing a spirit distinct from the individuals constituting it. Each member works for the family and not for himself alone. The earnings of all the members are to be turned in to support the whole family and every member has a claim on the earnings of every other.

It has often been asserted that in a Chinese family individuals are sacrificed for the whole group. This again is a case of superficial judgment. With us, the individual character is not only not sacrificed but its development is everlastingly encouraged by every possible means. For instance, the person who can earn the most is looked upon by every other with profound respect. A child, whether a boy or a girl, who can progress more rapidly in his or her schooling than any other is the favorite, and the pride of the household. Under the old system of examinations only the promising member was sent to participate as great expenses were involved which the family could not afford to lavish upon every member.

Each member of the family not only has a claim on the earnings of all the others but also is responsible for their conduct. The whole family is responsible for all the civil and criminal liabilities of each member. Hence it can be easily seen why brotherly love is considered one of the virtues. As each member is responsible for all the others it follows necessarily that every one must be loyal to every other. Should one be crippled or helpless he has all the rest to do his work as it would bring shame to the whole family to let the helpless struggle alone. This may be one of the reasons why we do not have any charitable institutions to speak of.

Another family virtue which is most important to us but seems to Westerners to be despotic is filial piety. It is the duty of all children to see that their parents suffer neither sorrow nor want. In old age the parents are jealously taken care of and their wishes invariably carried out. It is the latter feature that seems so despotic to Westerners. But through experience we came to the conclusion long ago that only the experienced is the wise teacher. The parents, the first to struggle for the family, the only members that have tasted all the sweet and bitter fruits of family life, can invariably tell better than anyone else what is best for each of their offspring, regarding their duties to the family. This, however, does not mean that the parents lay down a set of do's and don't's for their children to follow. What it amounts to in practice is that anyone contemplating an act must first present it to the parents and in the final decision take their opinion into account.

It is this respect for parents and loyalty to kin which keep the family a co-operative and harmonious whole.

We have so far described only the internal functions of the family. Externally, in the intercourse with other families, the father is the head. He represents the family as a whole. All the properties, real estate or personal, are owned in his name, only he cannot dispose of any of them without the consent of the members of the family. After his death, if the family continues, his rights are exercised and duties discharged by his eldest son. If the eldest son is dead these rights and duties fall upon the eldest son of the eldest son.

As long as either of the parents is living the family remains intact except in some extraordinary cases. When both of them are dead the family is divided up according to the number of sons, and the unmarried daughters go and live with the eldest son. The property is divided equally among the sons and unmarried daughters. If some of the sons happen to be dead by this time, their shares go to their children. If one of them does not leave any child his share

goes to the one who the family agrees should discharge the duties of the dead brother. After the division each son is the head of his own family; thus the division of an old family invariably brings into being a number of new families.

Thus we see that in a Chinese family there is a sort of socialism with the rights and duties of each member clearly defined. In it every member is directly responsible for the whole household, and every one labors for the common good without sacrificing his or her individuality.

2. The Greater Family.—Even after the division of the old family the new families, except on very rare occasions, generally live near each other. They occupy a certain part of the village or town and have an ancestral hall of their own where they carry on their inter-family intercourse and plan to "expand, and to protect their interests in common. Even immigrant families will always choose to settle near those who bear the same name in their newly adopted village. Very often families of the same or presumably the same origin occupy a village of their own, in which case the village invariably bears the family-name. These groups of families are generally called clans by Westerners and oriental students who have acquired the western sociological terminology. While it is incontestable that the term is applicable in so far as the solidarity of the groups are concerned, it must be pointed out that these families have no official comparable with the common chief of a clan. To avoid confusion therefore, we shall speak of these groups as "greater families" rather than "clans."

The headquarters of such a group is the ancestral hall where the remote great historical personages of the same name are housed. These personages serve as perpetual inspiration to each member of the group. The ancestral hall has property of its own the interests of which are used for the upkeep of the hall and the worship of the ancestors. All members whether rich or poor have the same rights and privileges in the ancestral hall.

The affairs of the group are administered by a board of elders—varying in number—chosen by popular vote. They hold their offices for a definite term. Every project, every phase of the intercourse with other groups, every acquisition or disposal of the common property, every loan and the interest on every loan, is strictly recorded and kept in the hall where any member may inspect it if he chooses. At the end of each year, whether it be the end of an administration or not, there is an annual meeting at which the records of all business, especially the financial transactions, are read. Every member is supposed to be present at this meeting. But, in practice, each family sends only one member as its representative, or sometimes it even gives the power of attorney to the representative of some other family to represent it. The office of treasurer invariably goes to the rich—and of course educated—member of the group, so that in case there be any fraud there may be enough private property to be confiscated.

The functions of the ancestral hall are numerous. Among the most important may be mentioned the social, economic, educational, and judicial functions. Certain days of the year are set off for worship. While admitting that in some degenerated cases there has slipped in an unanalysable compound of the secondary fears of God and ghosts and the primary fears of bad luck, it should be emphatically observed that this form of worship must not be confused with the primordial magic of the savage tribes, or the refined superstition of the Christian churches. This worship consists chiefly in paying reverence to the past and strengthening the bonds between the present generations. On the occasions of worship an extensive feast is prepared and every male member who is of age is supposed to be present at an appointed hour. The affair generally lasts a whole afternoon. There is just a little ceremony lasting only a few minutes and consisting in bowing before the tablets on which the names and titles of the various great ancestors are inscribed, and then each member goes to the seat provided for him. There he eats and drinks and en-

joys the company of others. As they meet in this manner only a few times each year, each tells to the rest all his failures and successes and receives and in turn gives advice on the subject of the struggle for existence. Needless to say it is these occasions more than anything else which serve to bind them together in a co-operative whole.

The ancestral hall also serves as the link between the poor and rich members of the group. As the ancestral hall property consists chiefly of land and ready cash, the poor members are privileged to rent the land at a very low rental and borrow the money at a very low rate of interest. The rich members on the other hand continuously contribute towards the increase of the ancestral property. Thus the ancestral hall serves to eliminate all the problems arising from the relation between land-owners and tenants and between capital and labor in the West.

Schools are provided in the ancestral hall for the children of the whole group. In some rich groups elaborate systems of subsidy are designed to encourage all intellectual pursuits including the taking of the government education. To a great extent the children of the group are looked upon as the common offspring of the group, and the ancestral hall provides and enforces a strict rule of discipline for them.

The board of elders also serve as arbitrators of the group. When conflict occurs between the members it is referred to the ancestral hall where all the evidences and arguments are introduced. After the concluding arguments, the elders, together with the representatives of the disinterested families, vote upon a final settlement each accompanying his vote with his opinion. Legally the disputants do not have to abide by the decision, but morally they are invariably bound to do so, for to go outside of the group to effect a settlement would be to bring disgrace upon the group. Besides, no outsider except the government official will undertake to adjust the differences for them; and even at that he does so only with the advice and assistance of the elders of their group.

Keeping these facts in view one can easily see why an

elaborate sermon is not required on every seventh day to keep even the illiterate and superstitious Chinese within the bounds of morality.

It may be mentioned in passing that the elected elders, together with some other experienced members of the group, represent the group in inter-group or village affairs.

Thus the greater family too is an organism having a spirit of its own distinctly apart from those of the individual families constituting it. Within it exists a representative and co-operative system where all the members enjoy the same rights and privileges and discharge the same duties and obligations. Here too, it should be strongly emphasized that harmony and co-operation are not attained at the expense of individuality.

3. The Village.—Where the village consists of a single group, one greater family, there is no village organization besides what has already been described. But where there are several distinct groups in the village a separate organization, similar to that of the greater family, is found. The headquarters of the village organization is, instead of the ancestral hall, a temple of some deified personage; sometimes a great literateur deified as the God of Literature, or a great warrior deified as the God of War—the deification of any great historical figure as the lord of his particular department generally serves the purpose.

The village temple also owns property as does the ancestral hall, and is administered by a board of elders elected by and from the representatives of the various groups. It also has festivals as the ancestral hall. It maintains schools for the children of the village. In a word, it exercises all the rights and discharges all the duties towards the inter-group life as does the ancestral hall towards the inter-family life. It represents the village in inter-village affairs and also in dealing with government officials. These we shall mention later on. In addition to the above it also provides public utilities for the village.

Here again we find another representative organization

with a spirit apart from those of the constituent groups. Within it are a number of smaller organizations each having its sphere of activity properly defined and each being directly responsible for the larger organization. The relation between the village and the group organizations is precisely the same as that between the group and the families or between the family and the individuals.

4. The Classes.—Leaving the definite social organizations we shall now examine one of the characteristic social institutions—characteristic not only of Chinese life but of human life in general. No description of Chinese life is complete without devoting some space to the class-system. Traditional China admits of four classes; the scholar, the farmer, the artisan, and the merchant, the degree of honor being in the order named.

It may be remarked that the fact that the military class is not included is often taken as the indication of China's disinclination towards war. This may be true, but a more acceptable inference may be drawn from history and literature: It seems as though every person is considered a soldier in time of war. As the class-system is effective only in time of peace, and as there is no need for an armed force in peaceful life, it follows that there need be no military class in society. This, however, is merely a suggestion and we need not dwell upon it.

Formerly—and theoretically of course—these classes were conceived as fixed, and a person born in one could not lift himself over into another. Westerners have seized upon this point and compared the Chinese classes with Hindu castes. They have failed to grasp the fact that whatever intentions the exponents of the class-philosophy may have had, actual practice—the only thing that amounts to anything—has emptied it of all its old meanings and loaded it up in their stead with new significances. These classes have come to mean nothing besides the distinguishing labels for the several professions. Far from being fixed, individuals have since time immemorial entered into

any occupation they chose. Although there prevails a general tendency on the part of the children to enter into the occupations of their fathers, different members of the same family are very frequently found to pursue different professions, and even the same individual is often found—especially in the south—engaged in several occupations at the same time.

As to honor, the only class that is looked upon with any special degree of respect by the other classes is that of the scholar—the other classes regarding each other as of the same rank. A merchant, or a farmer, or an artisan, feels an infinite pride when his son makes good in literary pursuit.

As our purpose of discussing the class-system is simply to correct the wrong conception of the fixity of the classes and to show that the different classes mean nothing more than different occupations in which any one may engage, we are content with the statement in passing that the class-system is not a peculiar characteristic of Chinese social life and consequently deserves no consideration under our special subject besides the statement of facts.

(2) ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTIONS.

As to the economic and industrial institutions the notable ones among them are the mutual loan associations and the various gilds.

1. *The Mutual Loan Associations.*—Besides the provision by which an individual may secure a loan from the ancestral hall or the village temple there is a very ingenious scheme by which an individual or an organization may secure loans. This scheme is designed to perform the function of an emergency organization and that of a savings club.

The scheme works in the following manner: If A needs some money and wants to obtain it through the mutual loan association, he goes to his friends B, C, etc., and puts the proposition before them. B and C then transmit A's proposal to their respective friends. When a sufficient number have approved of the proposition a mutual loan

association is formed with A as the head. A book is then prepared to keep a record of all the agreements and the names of the members. The number of meetings and the amount to be paid by each member at every meeting, together with the rate of interest, are then agreed upon and the stipulations entered in the book. The meeting place is generally at the home of A unless he wishes it otherwise.

Now, suppose that it is decided that each member shall bring \$5.00 to each meeting preceding the assignment of the loan—the amount will depend of course upon how much A needs—and that there shall be two meetings each month, and suppose that there are twenty-four members besides A; then A will get \$120.00 at the first meeting and will have to pay it back in twenty-four instalments of \$5.00 each at the subsequent meetings. The privilege of A's being the head consists in his receiving the loan first and paying it back in twenty-four instalments without any interest. In exchange for this privilege he has to keep a record of all the meetings without compensation.

The person to receive the loan at the next meeting is decided in two ways; either by auction or by lot. If by auction, as is done when several of the members need the loan badly, each member is entitled to one bid as to how much additional interest he wishes to pay besides what is stipulated in the original agreement. Each one writes his bid together with his name on a piece of paper and gives it to A. A then examines all the bids, and the loan goes to the highest bidder. Suppose that the interest stipulated is two percent for each meeting and the highest bidder bids two percent in addition to that; he will receive the loan of \$120.00, and will have to pay \$5.20 at each of the subsequent meetings. Before receiving the cash he must deposit with A a deed to some of his real estate properties as security for the loan.

If by lot, as is done when none of members needs the loan very badly, the person who draws the right lot gets it and then pays it back with the stipulated interest, that is, two percent,—\$5.10 at each of the subsequent meetings.

Each member gets the loan once, and there are as many meetings as there are members.

These mutual loan societies serve to help many to avoid financial difficulties on the one hand and to save up their earnings on the other; the utility of them will be more apparent the very moment it is pointed out that there are no banks in many of the villages. The thrifty members of the community generally join as many societies as their earning capacities allow. If they do not need the loans they leave them to be decided by lot and get them when they draw the right lot. If they do need them they go and bid for them.

Here we have an instance of co-operative economic institution in which a spirit of unity is manifested in the confidence of each member in every other and the ready assistance to each by every other when in need.

It may be remarked that there are no statutory laws concerning such organizations; the only law being that of common consent and mutual confidence.

2. The Gilds.—By far the most important embodiment of the co-operative spirit in Chinese industrial and economic life is the gild. There are two classes of gilds; the merchants' gild, and the artisans' gild. (Some authors include the various social societies in a third class.)

The merchants' gild is a local organization of the merchants of the same trade, for instance, the bankers' gild, the silk gild, the dry goods gild, etc. All the merchants of the same trade are eligible to the gild; the qualifications being good character and promptness in paying dues.

The artisans' gild is an organization of the men of the same profession, for instance, the carpenters' gild, the jewelers' gild, etc. The membership of the artisans' gild consists of both the masters and the apprentices.

Each gild has a president, a secretary, and an executive board. They are all elected yearly by popular vote. In the case of the merchants' gild the secretary is generally one who has a learned degree. The secretary virtually acts

as the attorney of the gild. All gild matters are first brought up before the leaders, and if they think these matters worth while they will submit them to the whole body.

It is the function of the gilds to settle disputes arising between their own members, and controversies with other gilds. They also fix the rate of exchange, the rate of interest, and the date for the settlement of accounts. In addition to these services they provide public improvements and strive toward the internal development of their trade.

Their meeting place is generally some of the village or town temples. Some of the rich gilds have their own headquarters.

It is the collectivity and solidarity of these organizations which is responsible for the preservation of social peace in China. They serve to preserve the stability of the market and to check the tendencies toward extremes, and thus prevent the deepening of the chasm between the classes.

Bishop James W. Bashford, a resident in China, tells us in his thoroughly trustworthy book on China, that "the democratic management of industrial and economic affairs through the gilds, and the democratic origin of industrial and commercial law, furnish the historic and economic basis for the democratic character of Chinese civilization. Indeed, so firmly is the authority of the gild established in settling commercial and industrial disputes that the government recognizes gild rules in all trials, giving the rank of statute laws." This same author tells us that "in China the gilds or voluntary organizations, combined through their chief representatives, frequently discharge the functions of a Board of Trade, a City Council, a Board of Charities, and a Board of Arbitration—all with semiofficial powers." Interesting, too, is his suggestion that "the labor unions of the United States might profit greatly by sending a representative to China to gather the constitutions of the Chinese gilds, and to make on the ground a thorough study of their practical management for the

larger and better organization of the industrial forces of the Western World."

Before leaving the social, economic, and industrial institutions, it should be observed that the collectivity and solidarity of these institutions have developed to such a degree that their rules, that is, the crystallized agreements, are most rigorously observed and their interests and dignity most jealously defended, against both internal violation and external encroachment, by each and every individual member. The individual conceives of his own interests as so intimately interwoven with those of the organization to which he belongs that it appears to him to be a matter of life and death to struggle in the defense of the latter. The driving force that obliges each individual to discharge his duties towards the organization is neither a religious belief nor an economic project—though either may figure in the process—but a definite common purpose inspired by reverence for the successful and strengthened by loyalty toward each other. This purpose is so settled in the minds of the individuals that it becomes established as a mental attitude, and is habitually regarded by them as a life distinct and yet inseparable from their own. Thus, honor and disgrace to the institution are identical with the honor and disgrace to the individual, and vice versa; and for this reason those individuals who are unable to pursue a certain line of activity with success consider it their duty and privilege to support others in it.

Bearing this in mind we can very easily understand the occasional tribal or village warfares which a Westerner does not hesitate at all to characterize as the remnants of primitive life.

(3) POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

As there are numerous treatises on China where descriptions of Chinese government may be found we need not concern ourselves with it except to call attention to one of the most atrociously and maliciously neglected functions, namely, the connecting link between the local and the

central government. No correct understanding of the Chinese government can be arrived at without a careful consideration of the agencies between the central government and the local self-governments of the villages and towns. And, by pointing out this fact we hope to be able to correct some wrong impressions made by the heretofore existing treatises.

1. *The Central Government*.—As we are concerned here only with discovering the connection between the social, industrial, and economic institutions on the one hand and the political institutions on the other, we need not go into the detailed organization and functions of the central government. A general scheme will serve well our purpose.

The old central government of China was generally accepted as a despotism pure and simple. It must be admitted that this idea is theoretically correct. Practice, however, proved the government anything but despotic. The emperor was the son of Heaven and had all the powers and rights over the life and property of every one of his people. But the method by which he ruled the country had necessarily curtailed his authority to such an extent that he had to do almost as the people pleased.

The country is divided into provinces, the provinces into districts or Fu's, and the districts into counties or Hsins, Chous, and Tins, each of which consists of a number of villages and towns. At the capital of the province was a governor, that of the district, a Taotai, and that of the county, a Chuchou or Chuhsin as the case might be. The emperor, or the court, used to appoint the governor, the governor in turn appointed the Taotai and Chuchou and Chuhsin. Any person, in order to be eligible for the appointment had to have a degree. Each official was responsible to his superior official for his territory. The rank of their positions were in the order named; the Chuchous or Chuhsins being the lowest and in closest contact with the people.

The duties of these officials consisted mainly in keeping

order, and collecting the taxes from their respective territories.

As it has been already pointed out that the local institutions always settle their own differences, provide their own necessary means for mutual assistance, and maintain order in their own localities, it can be readily seen that the activities of these officials were reduced to minimum. It was only when there occurred differences between individuals or organizations which could not be settled by the local organizations themselves that the affairs were referred to the county official by whose decision they had to abide. The decisions, however, depended upon the influence of the parties concerned; and this is where bribery came in. After the decision was pronounced, if the unfavored party did not wish to abide by it, he might appeal to the higher officials; whereupon the county official at once allied himself with the other party. This, together with the uncertainty of a favorable decision and the enormous expenses incurred, obliged the controversial parties always to try to effect a settlement either between themselves alone or with invited assistance of the representatives of some disinterested parties.

As the official, who, as a rule, was a stranger to the territory to which he was appointed, depended entirely upon the representatives of that territory in governing it, he had to make a formal call on each of the representatives residing at the capital when he entered his office, in order to receive advice from them.

The only obligation the people had toward the central government was the payment of taxes which were generally very small in comparison with those of the Western countries.

This brief sketch will serve to show the connection between the people and the central government, and the extent of the despotic authority of the emperor. We shall now proceed to one of the now obsolete and forgotten but nevertheless interesting political institutions.

2. The Bau-Tsia.—One of the most remarkable and indigenous systems is the Bau-Tsia which means very nearly “one who is responsible for, or a protector of, a certain part of the population.” This system has a long history with which we need not concern ourselves besides mentioning the fact that it died a gradual death in different parts of the country. In some places the remnants of the system persisted till the Revolution hastened it to its end.

Each Bau consisted of a village or part of a village—originally one hundred families—in which the families were divided into groups of tens or more. Each group elected one representative and the representatives for all the groups in the Bau elected from their midst one to represent the Bau. This representative was called Hsiang-chang (the elder of the village), or Bau-chang (the elder of the Bau), or Ti-bau (the protector of the locality).

The functions of the Bau-chang consisted in keeping the record of the registration of the families which he was responsible for, and reporting at the office of the county official regularly regarding the order of the locality.

The Bau-chang, although he was elected by and from the representatives of the families, was the representative of the county official, and hence of the central government, in his locality. Thus he was responsible to the government and not to the locality. Law suits must go through him to the county official. When an official visited his locality it was his duty to provide for and entertain his superior. The responsibility of locating offenders against the law rested with him as he could, through the registration he kept, find the fugitive easier than anyone else. He was often invited to sit in the village temple—but not the ancestral hall—when the controversies between the members in the village were being adjusted. In these cases he attended the tribunal in the capacity of a representative of the central government.

In spite of the fact that this system worked satisfactorily for centuries it has died out completely at present. This was evidently due to the efficiency of the local organizations

on the one hand and the deterioration of officialdom on the other. In the first place the local institutions regarded the relations between themselves as so sacred that they were often prone to settle their differences and provide for their own safety themselves, and were disinclined to solicit any assistance from without. In the next place the presence of the Bau-chang at the meetings where the local affairs were being managed seldom had any effect whatsoever upon the plans finally adopted. He was an outsider and was treated accordingly. Again, as his position was not a paid one and as he had to depend upon fees for his services he had the same tendencies as other government officials toward graft,—towards Tsan-ti-pi (scraping the crust off the land) as we call it. In many instances the system had so degenerated that no respectable person would accept the position and it devolved upon the county official to give it to anybody he pleased; and this sounded the death knell of the system.

The above instances are sufficient to show the connection between the local and the central government and to justify our assertion that the ultimate government of China has been popular and not despotic. Indeed, the local self-governments have proved so efficient in managing their own affairs that the common uneducated people to-day often declare that they fail to see anything that is considered important by the republicans which they have not had before.

(4) POPULAR ASPECTS OF THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT

In order to appreciate the impetus of the institutions thus far described it is necessary for one to glance at the philosophy which reflects them or, perhaps, produced them. Although there are several conflicting trends of philosophic thought in China, the Confucian school as a whole remains the most prominent throughout. At least the moral, economic, and political theories propounded by its exponents seem to have a stronger hold than any other theo-

ries upon the popular as well as the speculative mind. We shall therefore concern ourselves only with the Confucian theories which we consider the most representative reflection of Chinese life.

The doctrine that government is for the people and by the people is as old as legendary China itself. "Of all who are to be feared are not the people the most important?" so declared the legendary ruler Shun. His successor Yu put this into a positive statement by declaring that "the people are the root of the country."

It is true that the king is generally called the Son of Heaven, and that in latter times this has been taken to mean appointed by Heaven; but then, Heaven does not see nor does it hear. "Heaven sees when the people see; Heaven hears when the people hear." For instance, "Ki and Chew lost their empire through the loss of the people; they lost the people through the loss of the people's hearts. There is only one way to obtain the throng and that is to win the people. There is but one way to win the people and that is to win their hearts. Procure for them what they like and force not upon them what they dislike is the only method by which their hearts may be won." The watch-word of the Confucian school regarding government is "Win the people and the kingdom is won; lose the people and the kingdom is lost." "If the people have no confidence in their ruler there can be no peace in the nation."

Thus the popular idea of government frankly accepts the divine right of the king. But it turns right around and robs him of this right and vests it in the people by identifying the will of Heaven with that of the people themselves;—a logical defect in Chinese philosophy which seemingly proves in this case to be a blessing and not a curse.

Mencius, the most prominent of the Confucians, carries this theory to its logical consequences. From what has been said it can be easily seen that "the people are the most important element in the state. The altars of the spirits of land and grains are next. The king is the slightest."

Thus in making an appointment, "if the ministers all say that a man is able it is insufficient; if all officials say so, do not yet act accordingly; if all the people say so, then examine him and give him the appointment." And to punish an offender against the laws, "if the ministers all say that a man should be executed, listen not; if all the officials say so, still listen not; but if all the people say so, then examine him and see if he should be executed and execute him." It takes but a glance to see the principles of popular election and jury trial in the above passages, and it requires still less ado to point out the principle of recall in the following: "If a king is false the ministers should admonish him. If being repeatedly warned and he heeds not, depose him." Even "the killing of a bad ruler is not murder."

That the expression "all people" does not mean the impossible is seen in this; "If a ruler will please everyone he will find the days too short."

The principle of specialization is clearly recognized by Mencius: "Some labor with intellect and some with muscles. He who labors with intellect governs others; he who labors with muscles is governed by others." "If there be no exchange of products of labor and no interchange of service, so that too much there will make good too little here, the farmer will have a superfluity of grains and the women of cloth. If there be such interchange, carpenters and carriage-manufacturers may exchange their products." The mutual respect of each other's professions is urged in this: "Being unable to command and at the same time refusing to receive commands virtually isolates one from all intercourses with men."

This, however, does not imply that there is a class born to rule and another born to be ruled, for, "there was nowhere such a thing as being born noble; there was no rank in birth." Neither does it mean that men are born fit for the various occupations, for the words of Confucius that "I am not born wise but acquired my wisdom through my appreciation of the past and my diligence in the pursuit of knowledge," and that "even in a village of ten

families there are some who are as loyal and as confident only not so diligent as I am," are invariably pointed out to every adolescent as inspiration and encouragement towards a wide and promising outlook for the future.

If we are allowed to indulge in a little digression here it may be said that this is why universal education is so energetically urged. The old system of education may seem to the Westerner to be inadequate, but it was designed to bring out what is best in each individual on the one hand and to cultivate a mutual appreciation on the other. The old system, as may be recalled, had no class at all until it reached the seminary or the academy stage. Before that each pupil was a class himself, although he was given the same kind of materials as the others. And by a careful method of selection he was allowed to develop in the line of the least resistance.

Returning to our subject,—it should be added that since the function of government, as has been pointed out, is to satisfy the wants of the governed, it necessarily follows that adaptability is the most important; as the wants of the people change continuously as time goes on. Laws and standards, therefore, must be constantly modified to conform to the common consciousness. "There is no invariable standard of virtue, only a supreme regard for what is good makes a criterion of it. There is no invariable characteristic of what is good that is to be supremely regarded; it is found where there is a conformity with the common consciousness as to what is good."

As to the ruler, "he must first himself possess of the qualities which he requires of the people, and must be free from the qualities which he requires the people to avoid." "What is most potent is to be a man and one's influence will be felt throughout the state." "He that exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared with the north polar star which keeps its place while all the other stars turn about it." "The superior man offers not rewards, yet the people are stimulated to virtue. Nor

shows he wrath, yet the people are more awed than by hatchets and axes."

Force is inadequate for government, for "when one subdues by force, people submit not because they are willing but because they are not strong enough to resist. When one subdues by virtue, people are pleased and submit to him heartily."

Confucius himself described what he conceived as a model ruler in these words: "By his generosity he won all; by his sincerity he made people trust in him; by his earnest activity his achievements were great; and by his justice all were delighted."

Further citations might be given but would not serve to make it any clearer that the popular idea of government is: (1) Government should be by the consent of the governed; (2) Moral agencies rather than physical forces should be employed; (3) The ablest, wisest, most experienced, and most virtuous are indispensable for a good government; and (4) It rests with the people the right to depose any ruler whose conduct they do not approve.

These principles not only pervade Chinese literature of every period but are also embodied in all elementary readers in the schools. It is not surprising, therefore, to find their influences among all classes and institutions throughout the country.

Our discussion of the democratic tendencies and institutions in China has only touched the surface. Yet even a mere general survey suggests that this archaic people, which is generally supposed to be misgoverned, oppressed, and thus miserable, bound by customs and traditions instead of laws, and dominated by superstitions and heathen ideas, may, after all, have something in common with its contemporaries of the West.

In considering the prospects for democracy in China it is necessary to take into account not only these already existing bases of native ideals and institutions but also the new factor of Western influences.

(5) THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION.

This subject alone requires a separate treatise. It suffices, however, to mention that as China is coming into closer and closer contact every day with the West, she cannot keep her own ideas and refuse to assimilate those of the West—leaving out of account entirely the question of superiority and inferiority. Assimilations are going on both consciously and unconsciously, and are destined to go on until a certain degree of equilibrium is at least temporarily reached.

In the first place the influx of Christianity has awakened and strengthened in the minds of part of the population the new meaning of worship and meditation originally introduced into Chinese life by Buddhism, and has replaced some of the cruder superstitious elements. The propagandist character of Christianity itself has given the people another example of co-operative pursuit.

In the next place Western philosophy has brought with it an individualism which has modified the family life and social relationship of some of us. Some are now inclined to seek to express individuality even at the expense of the family and society—whether the individuality so expressed be desirable or not. This, coupled with the introduction of a larger scale of industry, the more efficient means of communication, and the highly specialized natural and social sciences, has complicated our social problems to such an extent that the old institutions, taken unprepared, seem to be unable to offer any solution in their separate capacities, and thus necessitate a co-operation of a larger scale.

Last and most important of all, contact with the West has induced a feeling of nationality which is more intense than it has ever been before. This, more than anything else, has brought about the realization of the need of a higher co-operation and closer co-ordination with the central government in order to effect a stronger organization for self-defense. Thus local feeling and local loyalty are extended and converted into a national feeling and a

national loyalty. Provincial barriers are torn down and there is in sight a greater co-operation whose accomplishment time only can tell. In the meantime, by a careful and intelligent direction of the various forces, who can say that the goal may not be reached before it is too late?

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